



Integrating AAC
Into your Day:
Ideas, Tips, and Tricks from A-Z and Everything In
Between

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Basic Understandings

- Communication is the essence of human life and all people have the right to communicate to the fullest extent possible (ASHA)
- The selection of functional and motivating vocabulary is critical for effective use of an augmentative communication device. (DynaVox Systems)
- Vocabulary is an ongoing process. As the AAC user's communication needs and skills change, appropriate alterations to vocabulary sets must be made. Vocabulary selection is truly a dynamic process, always changing and never complete (DynaVox Systems)
- When deciding on appropriate vocabulary, need to consider communicator's age, gender, and personal interests. (DynaVox Systems)
 - Is this something the AAC user would want to talk about?
 - Is this something the AAC user needs to talk about?
 - Are these the words they would likely use?
 - Also consider where the AAC user will be when they are using board and with whom they are expected to communicate.
- Benefits of a speech output device (McGuinness and Speck):
 - Provides a verbal model
 - Promotes verbal imitation
 - Ensures listener attention
 - Clarifies pragmatic intent for speaker and listener
- Typical communication interaction style of augmented speaker (Elder and Goossens')
 1. Is often a passive, unmotivated communicator, rarely initiating communication interaction
 2. Is typically a respondent communicator
 3. Typically exhibits a limited range of communicative functions (basic needs or wants)
 4. Takes significantly fewer conversational turns than their non-impaired partners.
 5. Typically has limited peer to peer communication interactions.
- The Typical Communication Interaction Style of the Speaking Partner (Elder and Goossens')
 1. Typically occupies the dominant role in the interaction
 2. Is often unresponsive to the augmented speaker's communication attempts
 3. Frequently anticipates the needs and wants of the augmented speaker
 4. Typically asks numerous questions
- Forms of communication (Hodgdon):

Speech	Sign language	Pointing
Gestures	Body language	Pictures
Objects	Written language	
Behaviors		

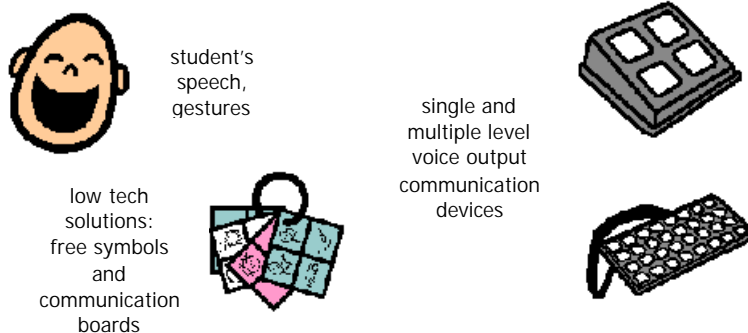
Hit, kick, bite, scream, yell, tantrum, cry, change proximity, run away, attack, self abuse

➤ Functions of communication (Hodgdon):

Requests
Protest
Greet
Ask Questions
Answer Questions
Comment
Social Interaction
Label
Etc.

Getting Started

➤ Develop a system; don't rely on one method or device



➤ Order of Activity format (Elder and Goossens')

- Generally on a smaller board (9 cells or less)
- Pictures are "organized according to the event sequence of the activity"
- Selected messages should "reflect those most highly prioritized in the social exchange"

Helps show the cause and effect relationship as well as teaches sequencing

➤ Fitzgerald Key format (Elder and Goossens')

- Symbols that appear frequently on different boards should remain in the same location on each board.
- Polar opposites should be placed near each other (vertically or horizontally side by side)
- Nouns should be organized in sub-categories (food groups, clothing types, etc...)

➤ How decide what to say?

- Need to have set class routines and schedules so know what vocabulary is needed.
- Every child wants to say what the other children are saying.
 - Listen to what other kids are saying.
 - What are they saying
 - How are they saying it?
- Scripting –
 - observe situation
 - go over situation in your head

- ❖ Students need to learn how language works. What is going to happen when they press or show a symbol
- ❖ Don't forget RECEPTIVE language
 - Can't pull information out if you haven't successfully put it in (Goossens' et al)
 - Reinforcement precedes communication (Blackstone 1993)
- Symbols need to be accessible when and where teacher and student need them.
- Let students have some control over their day: show that it matters that they are at school. Would the day be exactly the same if the student wasn't there?
- When programming a device, use a voice that is the same age and sex as the student that will be using the device
- If it motivates student, use a familiar voice
- Use the communication device for messages that need to be said outloud as well as for messages that can be said repeatedly throughout an activity or the entire day (such as social comments and opportunities for students to initiate conversations). To supplement the device, provide communication boards for answering questions and making choices.
- Use peer helpers to help create communication overlays. Not only can they help decide what messages should be placed on the overlay, they can actually make the overlays.



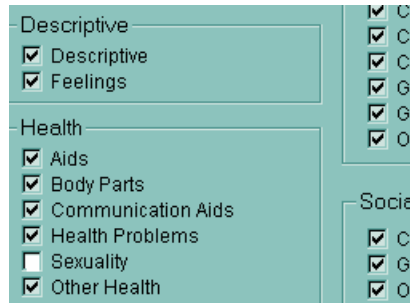
If a peer helper is using BoardMaker to make an overlay, you will want to make sure the Sexuality symbols are not available.

On a PC:

1. Select the categories button



2. Uncheck the sexuality symbols

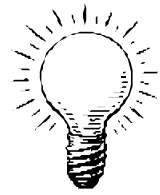


3. Click on OK

On a Mac:

1. Find the BoardMaker folder on your Hard drive
2. Open the "Library" folder
3. Drag the Sexual.c and Sexuality files out of this folder into the BoardMaker folder.

Ideas



- Creative Stupidity
- Have symbols always available
 1. on desk
 2. on lanyard
 3. on computer table
- Use pictures that are already available (calendar, worksheets)
- Have symbols where you need them (float board for in pool, on lunchbox, on hallpass)
- Communication placemat for use at lunch, snack, work, art
- Program device so student can
 1. say the pledge
 2. read a story with class or to younger kids
 3. participate in class play
 4. can take a survey
 5. be the class leader
 6. sing a song
 7. tell a joke
 8. communicate at home what happened during day, and vice versa
 9. participate in show and tell
 10. order food at a restaurant
 11. greet the attendance secretary
 12. give directions to the class (cooking)
 13. conduct a spelling test
- Use a choice board so student can
 1. pick a friend to sit by
 2. pick a color to color with
 3. choose what song comes next
 4. choose what stretch to do next in PE
 5. choose what they want to do during leisure time
 6. choose their daily reward
- Lower functioning students can benefit from the use of "more" / "finished" cards. Even if they aren't able to use them, staff members can show them at the appropriate time so students can learn their function / meaning.
- Two hand choice making
- A communication temptation is a strategy that involves setting up the environment or a situation in such a way that it "temps" your student to communicate with you using their communication device, signs, symbols, or verbalizations.

Here are a few examples of communication temptations (Barry Prizant):

1. Eat a desired food item in front of the child without offering any to the child.
2. Activate a wind-up toy, let it deactivate, and hand it to the child.
3. Open a jar of bubbles, blow bubbles, then close the jar tightly. Hand the closed jar to the child.
4. Place a desired food item or toy in a clear container that the child cannot open while the child is watching. Put the container in front of the child and wait.
5. Engage the child in an activity of interest that necessitates the use of an instrument for completion (e.g. crayon for drawing, spoon for eating). Have a third person come over and take the instrument, go sit on the distant side of the room, while holding the instrument within the child's sight and wait.

Powerful One-Shots (Speck):

- ✓ My Turn / I want a turn
- ✓ More, please
- ✓ Let's do it again
- ✓ Look at me!
- ✓ You look great today!
- ✓ Let's sing a song. Look what I did!
- ✓ Can we play a game?
- ✓ Where are we going today?
- ✓ What's happening?
- ✓ Whatcha doing?
- ✓ Let me try.
- ✓ Leave me alone.
- ✓ That's cool!
- ✓ Yeah, right!
- ✓ I don't understand.
- ✓ See ya later alligator!





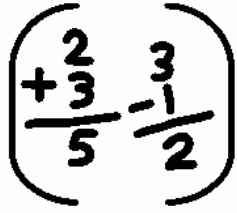



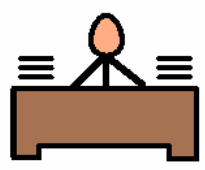





Quick and easy way to read a story (Burkhart):

1. Take an 8 page book and an 8 cell communication device
2. Program the words from page 1 into cell 1, program the words from page 2 into cell 2, etc...
3. Place a red post-it note on page 1 and on cell 1, place a yellow post-it note on page 2 and on cell 2, etc...
4. Now, the student can match the post-it notes from the book to the communication device. This way, they can read the book by matching colors AND the teacher doesn't need to take the time to make an overlay for the book.

Example of Conversational Facilitation Hierarchy Activity: Play With PlayDoh

1. Provide eye contact and WAIT expectantly for student to produce a message using any communication mode (speech, gestures, pictures).
2. Converse with student about the activity. "I like to play with playdoh. I think I'll make a star." PAUSE to provide student with an opportunity to communicate.
3. Converse further, activating the appropriate key words on the device or board, such as 'playdoh' and 'cooking cutter'. PAUSE
4. Express expectation for student to communicate something by establishing a general topic. "Tell me what you want to do." PAUSE
5. Suggest possible messages. "You can roll your playdoh or use cookie cutters." Point to the corresponding symbols as you say this. PAUSE
6. Activate key words on the device or board, such as 'playdoh', 'cookie cutter', etc.... PAUSE
7. Ask a WH question: "What do you want?" PAUSE
8. Ask a yes/no question: "Do you want some playdoh?"

<p>Morning Meeting</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk about what happened at home ▪ Pledge ▪ Pick song ▪ Answer questions ▪ Be the leader ▪ Take attendance
<p>P.E.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pick order of stretches ▪ Call out stretches ▪ Social comments during game
<p>Math Class</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quiz peers ▪ Brainstorm with teacher ▪ Roll call ▪ Answer questions ▪ Choose manipulatives ▪ Social comments
<p>Language Arts</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct interview ▪ Prepositions ▪ Read book ▪ Poetry ▪ Vocabulary activity ▪ Lunch activity ▪ Select peer to sit by
<p>Lunch</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lunch box ▪ Ordering ▪ Lunch placemat ▪ Social comments
<p>Art Class</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Placemat ▪ Social comments ▪ choice board for colors
<p>Work</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More / Finish cards ▪ Placemat ▪ Social comments

<p>Community Travel</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social comments
<p>Snack / Cooking</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give directions ▪ Social comments ▪ Communication temptations
<p>Leisure Time</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hokey Pokey ▪ Environmental temptations ▪ Choice board ▪ Playing game ▪ Social Comments

TIPS

- Place tabs on overlays so they are easier to get in/out of the device
 1. Label tabs so know what content on overlay
 2. Use symbol on tab so student can use tab too
- Store symbols in pockets in 3 ring binders. If symbols are for a certain activity or song, include a copy of the activity or words to the song with the symbols.
- Store symbols where you are going to use them. 30 second rule: You want to be able to get it within 30 seconds.
 1. Symbols for snack and cooking on the fridge (magnets, Velcro strips).
 2. See baggie idea that is listed below.
- Have symbols readily available for students
 1. Have a word wall in the room. Encourage students to get symbols off of the wall as they need them.
 2. Store communication overlays on the wall or readily available folders so students can get an overlay as they need it.
 3. Put individual symbols that are used during an activity in a baggie and label the baggie. Then, Velcro the baggies in one place in your classroom or near the location of the activity.
 4. To individualize the baggie system for a student, just place the student's name and the activity on the front of the baggie then place their symbols for that activity in the baggie. This allows the teacher to quickly locate specific student's symbols quickly (example: if one student needs photos and another is using BoardMaker symbols).
 5. Many companies sell compartmentalized wall hangings. Symbols and words can be placed in the compartments to visually organize them. Hang this near where you will need the symbols (one on the board for morning meeting, one in the reading area for reading books, etc...).
- Store symbols in craft / tool organizers. Place a label on the front of the drawer so you know its contents.

Helpful Web Sites

www.speakingofspeech.com

This website has lots of tips, already-made materials, and lessons; all of which are related to communication and / or technology. To access the materials, visit the site and select "activity exchange" from the menu on the left hand side of the screen.

www.aacintervention.com

This website contains information and innovative ideas for the novice user of AAC as well as tips for the experienced user.

www.lburkhart.com

This website is chock-full of information including handouts on starting communication and switch use. Of special interest: This site also has instructions for creating your very own "Talking Switch".

www.mayer-johnson.com

This is the website for the company that makes and sells BoardMaker. At this site, you will find downloadable updates, pre-made grids, extra symbols, and schedules too. Also available on this site are all of the products that Mayer-Johnson sells, including many books that contain pre-made activities and communication boards.

www.ablenetinc.com

This website has a plethora of ideas for using technology to communicate and interact within the school day, in the community, and at home. All ideas involve devices available from Ablenet; most ideas can be generalized to other devices that you may already contain in your classroom. Once at this website, select the "idea" tab and then select "idea archives" from the menu on the left hand side.

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